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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples, a non-governmental organization on the roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[17 February 2014]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Human rights violations in the Kurdish region of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The Islamic Republic of Iran shelters Kurdish salafistes groups

The emergence of Salafism in Iranian Kurdistan is a new phenomenon. When American forces attacked the military bases of Ansar Islam in 2003, in the region of Biara (Awraman) in Iraqi Kurdistan, the insurgent suffered huge human losses and survivors of this group flew to Iran. Ansar members who remained in Iran together with Kurdish salafists in Iran created the group "Kataïb Qaid in Kurdistan". Initially, their main goal was to fight the regional government of Iraqi Kurdistan and in early 2004 they declared "jihad" on it[1].

As far as bilateral relations are concerned between Iran and Kurdish Islamists' movements, Iran has always had double standards policies towards the Kurdish Salafists groups in Iranian Kurdistan. Some observers of Islamists groups in Kurdistan (Pishtiwan Sadiq, 2006; Idris Siwayli, 2009; David Romano, 2007) are of the opinion that the Islamic Republic of Iran played a key role in the creation of Islamist Movement in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The Iranian government has always held selective policies towards these groups. Those who were not harmful to the clerical system were tolerated in Iran, even though they were sources of concern for neighbouring countries. The Islamic Republic authorities supported the recruitment of young Kurds who were subsequently sent to Afghanistan and Iraqi Kurdistan. However, when these Salafi groups had activities against the Islamic Republic of Iran, their members were repressed, imprisoned and even executed.

By supporting the activities of these groups in Iranian Kurdistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran clearly planned to weaken the Kurdish nationalist movements in Iran. For them it is much more preferable that the Kurdish youths join Islamists groups rather than Kurdish nationalist movements. Some observers believe that the Iranian authorities are well aware of the existence of these groups on Iranian soil as some training camps are even settled not far from major cities such as the city of Sanandaj in Iranian Kurdistan.

Education in mother tongue

The wake of the promises made by the Iranian government on educating in ethnic and national languages in Iran coincided with the visit of President Hassan Rohani to the city of Ahvaz, the capital of the province of Khuzestan (Arabistan) which has Arabic majority. Opposition to these promises came from conservative Islamists, nationalists Persians, as well as from secularists. These groups were all united against the application of Article 15 of the Iranian Constitution which hasn't been implemented since the 1979 Revolution in Iran. This Article stipulates that while the official language in Iran is Persian, but it also allows the use of regional and ethnical languages in the press, the public media, and education of their literature in schools along with Persian language.

Ali Yonsei, Hassan Rohani's Special Adviser, said in an interview with the semi-official news agency Mehr that the government is preparing a plan that would allow education in minority languages. Minority represent 60% of the population in Iran. It is thus not surprising that the debate about the need to teach in the national languages of non-Persian peoples has taken a considerable importance.

This demand faces tough opposition from different Persian circles, such as the Persian Language Academy, nationalist Persian parties as well as from Islamic conservative circle. All in all, these groups strongly reject teaching in minority languages, some even calling it a "conspiracy" against the Persian language. Among those who are against the use of minority languages in Iran are Dr. Adel Haddad, the head of the Persian language Academy as well as the Education Committee of the Parliament. It is to be said that Article 15 of the Iranian Constitution has become an electoral tool in the past three years, a mean to obtain the vote of national minorities in Iran but it is yet never to be implemented.

[1] www.radiozamaneh.com/120170

Drug laboratories held by Gardien (Pasdaran) in the region of Sardaht in Iranian Kurdistan

Credible sources in the Sardasht region in Iranian Kurdistan reveal that the members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) are running about 300 drug laboratories in which drugs are produced and distributed. These activities are taking place in the area of Sardasht, Rabat and Nelas, in which they are producing and selling methamphetamine and other drugs.

According to information collected from different sources by Kurdistan Press Agency[2], "all those people who are working in these places carry weapons distributed by the Revolutionary Guards, and nobody can stop them or file legal charges against them." and "drugs production is on such an high level that the Revolutionary Guard distribute drugs from Sardsht to all Kurdish cities and towns, and even to Iran as a whole". It should be noted that human rights organizations as well as Kurdish political parties in Iran have always drawn attention to the scourge of drug use among the Kurdish population. Those who follow the socio-political situation in Iranian Kurdistan believe that this is an elaborated policy by the Iranian authorities, and this drug policies aim at creating drug addiction among Kurdish youths to turn their attention from Kurdish national project and nationalism sentiments.

Executions

A new case has been filed at the Penal Court against Zanyar Moradi and Loghman Moradi, two Kurdish prisoners sentenced to death on "moharebeh" (enmity with God) charges, Zanyar Moradi's father told the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran. Eghbal Moradi told the Campaign that due to pressure from human rights organizations to prevent the execution of Zanyar and Loghman Moradi on moharebeh charges, the Iranian Government is now reviewing their case under different charges, so that the two men can be executed based on Qisas (retribution) Law. Loghman and Zanyar Moradi were accused of "involvement in the murder of the Marivan Friday Imam's son" and "moharebeh" in 2009, charges they never accepted, calling the case a scenario fabricated by the Intelligence Ministry. According to Moradi's father, both his sons have repeatedly said that they were forced to confess the murder under torture[3].

Five other prisoners have been executed in Uremia Central Prison on charge of murder: Karim Rasai, Javad Ghasem Zadeh, Hamid Islam Sokan, Rashid Keramat and Khezr Ahous. The annual statistics of Human Rights Activists count 585 prisoners executed in Iran during 2013. 52% of these prisoners were executed on charge of drug trafficking[4].

25 Kurdish political prisoners sentenced to death

The scope of capital sentences in Iran is broad. A dozens of Kurdish political and civil prisoners have been sentenced to death, without proper legal representation, in connection with their alleged membership of and activities for Kurdish prohibited organizations and are (at the time of writing) on death row. According to Kurdistan Press Agency Statistics Center[5], 25 Kurdish political activists who are being held in the Iranian prisons are waiting for their sentence to be carried out. These 25 prisoners have been sentenced to death by the Iranian judicial system for ''Fighting, membership in one of the Kurdish oppositional parties of Iranian Islamic Government, and Propaganda against national security.''

The 25 prisoners are: Habibulla LATIFI, Rashid AKHKENDI, Mustefa SALIMI, Zaniar MURADI, Luqman MURADI, Aziz MUHAMEDZADEH, Hassan TALAEE, Behrooz ALKANI, Ali AFSHARI, Habib AFSHARI, Semko KHORSHIDI, Sirwan NAZHWARI, Ibrahim ESSAPOOR, Bakhtyar MEHMARI, Reza MALAZADEH, Hushang RAZAEE, Saman NASIM, Mansoor ARWAND, Abdullah SARWARYAN, Hussein FRUHIDEH, Sabir MUKHALID MAWANA, Muhemed ABDULLAHY, Anwar ROSTAMI, Arman PARWIZI.

[2] http://www.kurdpa.net/english/index.php?cat=more&id=13349
[3] http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2014/01/moradi-qisas/
[4] http://www.iranpressnews.com/english/source/165970.html
[5] http://www.kurdpa.net/english/index.php?cat=more&id=13349

Conclusion and recommendations

Regardless of the current Iranian President the repression against the ethnic minorities continues. Hereby, we call on the international community and human rights organizations to urge the Iranian government to abide by its international obligations and to respect the ethnic and national rights of Non-Persian people in Iran.

MRAP calls upon the Iranian authorities to:

- halt arbitrary detentions of ethnic and religious minority representatives and cease torture and forced confessions as guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- allow all detainees to access legal advice;
- investigate cases of torture and human rights abuses based on ethnicity or religion and eradicate impunity for such acts;
- end the 'securitization' and persecution of ethnic cultural organizations;
- allow the use of regional languages in print, audio and online media as guaranteed by Article 15 of the Iranian Constitution.

MRAP calls upon the Independent Expert on minority issues, the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the **Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran to pay specific attention to the issues regarding continued violations of ethnic and national minorities rights in Iran.